

**TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Secretariat

New York, 9-10 February 2012

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT TO THE TENTH COORDINATION
MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION¹**

Commonwealth Secretariat

¹ The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

Introduction

1. International migration is intimately linked to development and poverty reduction and, as a consequence, is a key area for advocacy and research by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Irregular migration undermines national policy making, but when well managed, migration can be a boon for a country's prosperity and resilience. Commonwealth Heads of Government, at their 2011 summit in Perth, Australia, recognised the need to maximise benefits of migration, both economic and social.

2. In 2010, Commonwealth countries accounted for 35 per cent of the US\$325 billion flow in global remittances from migrants. South Asian member states such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh experienced net immigration between 2005 and 2010, whereas other states, mainly the UK, Canada, Australia and South Africa, saw net emigration. (See Annex 1).

3. The Commonwealth Secretariat has been at the forefront of helping small states, which are especially vulnerable to the negative impacts of migration, to be heard in international policy making fora. Comprising 60 per cent of the Commonwealth's members, small states tend to be highly orientated toward just a few sectors and industries can often be low skilled. As a consequence, many skilled and educated individuals decide to leave to pursue opportunities abroad.

4. On the whole, small states have been source countries. Next to larger states they record a much higher percentage of their population as migrants. For example, in 2000 – 2005, India recorded 1.4 million immigrants, amounting to around 0.13 per cent of its total population. On the other hand, Tonga had 10,000 immigrants for the same period, or 10 per cent of its population. This contributed to a net decline in Tonga's population from 100,000 in 2000 to 99,000 in 2005. The Pacific country lost a further 8.1 per cent of its population, or 8,000 people, in 2005. Countries such as Guyana, Fiji Grenada, Samoa, Tonga, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines lost over 10 per cent of their populations to migration over the period 2000- 2005.

5. World Bank estimates show that a large proportion of immigrants from small states are tertiary-educated. For the year 2000, statistics show that 89.0 per cent of Guyana's migrants possessed this level of education. Following suit were Grenada's migrants of whom 85.1 per cent were tertiary educated, then Jamaica (85.1 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (79.3 per cent), Samoa (76.4 per cent), Tonga (75.2 per cent),

migration and remittances are mere estimates given the lack of systems to accurately collect data.

3. Advocacy to address worker migration from critical sectors– The departure of key workers can have adverse impacts on a country's economy, particularly the health and education sectors in developing small states, and seriously impede the delivery of these services.

International recruitment

New initiatives

7. Migration of teachers provides a benefit to states with a shortage of education professionals, but it can put some countries' school systems at risk of 'brain drain'. Protecting teachers' interests when they move abroad and are faced with unfamiliar systems is also an on-going issue. The Commonwealth Secretariat is developing a new tool to complement the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol in assisting countries to manage the international recruitment of teachers. This flexible tool will be called the Model Memorandum of Understanding for the Recruitment of Migrant Teachers and will assist bodies to negotiate the number and type of teachers to be recruited, as well as the mechanisms by which the recruitment will be managed. It will be freely adaptable by the parties and the Secretariat will be able to assist where required. The Model MoU will provide an example of good practice in setting out the terms under which teachers should be recruited from one country to work in another, providing a vehicle for agreeing principles for the ethical recruitment of teachers. This will ensure that both source and destination countries gain, and that teachers' rights are protected

8. Qualified, experienced teachers tend to be significantly under-represented in

need to prevent the exploitation of these human resources of poor countries. The protocol also seeks to safeguard the rights of recruited teachers and the conditions relating to their service. Although it does not hold any legal authority, all member countries are encouraged to develop such regulations and legislation necessary to meet the protocol. Recruiting source countries are assigned a number of rights and recruited teachers have the right to full information about their work. In turn teachers are expected to show transparency in their dealings with current and prospective employers and give adequate notice of resignation or requests to leave. The protocol has formed the basis for agreements between Commonwealth countries, such as the exchange of teachers between Rwanda and Kenya, and non-Commonwealth states, for instance informing policy in Barbados in response to requests for teachers from the USA.

Past projects

10. The Commonwealth Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health Workers was adopted by Commonwealth Health Ministers in May 2003. Like the teachers protocol, it is not a legal document, however it provides guidelines for the international recruitment of health workers in a manner that takes into account the potential impact of such recruitment on services in the source country. The code is intended to discourage the targeted recruitment of health workers from 2(e)1.17 of 13s

identify the major constraints that hamper remittance opportunities, while disseminating international experiences and best practice. The workshops allowed policy makers and international experts to analyse problems confronting remittances, share innovative solutions and build capacity – including on policy formulation and the design and carrying out of remittance surveys.

13. The Commonwealth Secretariat hosted a meeting in May 2007 to agree on strategies to facilitate the Global Forum on Migration and Development scheduled for Belgium later in the year, assessing existing policies and challenges confronting partners. The meeting covered issues including the implications of migration on small states given their comparatively limited human resources and narrow industries. It recommended policy actions including the need to recognise the rights of migrants, the need to provide for the international comparability and recognition of qualifications, and to encourage the development of appropriate multilateral approaches.

14. The Commonwealth Secretariat hosted a meeting of experts in 2004 and completed a number of policy studies on how mode four (movement of natural persons) of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) can be implemented between developing countries and developed countries. The papers from these studies have been published in the volume *Trade, Migration and Labour Mobility*

Country	2007	2008	2009	2010	2000-05	2005-2010
Antigua and Barbuda	24	26	24	25		
Australia	3,826	4,713	4,579	4,840	132.3	224.9
Bahamas	-	-	-	-	1.3	1.3